# Contents

Acknowledgements xi  
Agradecimentos xv  
List of Figures xxvii  
List of Tables xxxi  
Acronyms xxxiii  

Introduction 3  

I History and Context 9  

1 History and political context 11  
1.1 History of the struggle for land in Brazil ............ 11  
1.1.1 Portuguese colonization ............................. 12  
1.1.2 The independence of Brazil  .......................... 12  
1.1.3 The first signs of organized struggle for land (19th  
and 20th centuries) ............................... 13  
1.1.4 The 1940s and 1960s: the first wave of protest .... 14  
1.1.5 The 1970s and 1980s: the organization of the land-  
less workers ........................................ 15  
1.1.6 The 1990s: the second wave of protest .............. 18  
1.2 Brazilian agrarian reform ............................. 19  
1.2.1 Policies and political context ........................ 19  
1.2.2 The demand for land in Brazil ........................ 28
Contents

2 The Landless Rural Workers Movement 31
  2.1 The repertoire of collective actions ............................ 31
  2.2 The activists .................................................. 33
  2.3 The MST communities ......................................... 37
  2.4 The organizational structure .................................... 41
  2.5 Sharing ideology ............................................... 46
     2.5.1 Education: the Pedagogy of the Movement .............. 48
     2.5.2 Symbols ................................................... 51
     2.5.3 Mística .................................................... 52
  2.6 The MST’s achievements and future ........................... 53

II Theories and Methods 57

3 Theoretical framework 59
  3.1 Hypotheses and assumptions ................................... 63
     3.1.1 Understanding the sustained participation process .... 63
     3.1.2 Understanding the disengagement process ............... 76
     3.1.3 The interrelation of sustained participation’s antecedents: the model of sustained participation and disengagement ......................................................... 79
     3.1.4 Understanding individuals’ participation during childhood and their later sustained participation or disengagement ......................................................... 84
  3.2 Control variables ............................................... 90

4 Methodology 93
  4.1 Research design ............................................... 94
     4.1.1 Mixed methods concurrent triangulation design ....... 95
     4.1.2 Multiple-case study design ............................... 97
  4.2 Methods ....................................................... 99
     4.2.1 Semi-structured questionnaire ............................ 101
     4.2.2 Semi-structured interviews with activists .............. 111
     4.2.3 Semi-structured interviews with individuals who stopped participating ......................................................... 113
## Contents

4.2.4 Participant observation ........................................ 114
4.2.5 Documentary sources ......................................... 115
4.3 General data collection procedures ............................. 116
4.4 Data analysis .......................................................... 118
  4.4.1 Mixed methods analysis ....................................... 118
  4.4.2 Case study analysis ............................................. 123
4.5 Study limitations ....................................................... 124

### III Results and Discussion

5 Commitment ............................................................ 129
  5.1 The components of commitment ................................. 130
    5.1.1 Affective commitment ...................................... 130
    5.1.2 Continuance commitment ................................... 134
    5.1.3 Normative commitment ...................................... 141
  5.2 Willingness to continue participating ........................ 147
  5.3 Discussion and conclusion ...................................... 153

6 Gratifying participation .............................................. 165
  6.1 Causes of gratifying participation ............................. 165
    6.1.1 Providing collective goods .................................. 165
    6.1.2 Feeling useful ................................................ 166
    6.1.3 Expressing ideology ......................................... 167
    6.1.4 Expressing social identity .................................. 169
    6.1.5 Expanding worldviews ....................................... 170
    6.1.6 Movement’s efficacy ......................................... 172
    6.1.7 Social visibility .............................................. 173
    6.1.8 Sense of belonging .......................................... 174
    6.1.9 Dignified life ................................................ 175
  6.2 Discussion and conclusion ...................................... 176

7 Reasons for disengagement ......................................... 181
  7.1 The activists’ trajectories ...................................... 182
    7.1.1 An activism trajectory of an identity seeker .......... 182
Contents

7.1.2 An activism trajectory of a life-meaning seeker . . . 188
7.1.3 Personal fulfilment versus activism . . . . . . . . . . . 195
7.1.4 Personal life (gender role) versus activism . . . . . . 202
7.2 Discussion and conclusion . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 207

8 The sustained participation of the settler’s children 219
8.1 Commitment . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 220
8.1.1 Patterns of commitment of activists who grew up in
MST communities . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 220
8.1.2 Comparing the levels of commitment of the activists
who grew up in MST communities with the levels of
commitment of those who did not . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 224
8.2 Willingness to continue participating . . . . . . . . . . . 235
8.3 Conclusion . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 239

9 The disengagement of the settler’s children 243
9.1 The settlers’ children from the South and from the Northeast
245
9.1.1 The disengagement of the MST settlers’ children in
the South . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 245
9.1.2 The sustained participation of the MST settlers’ chil-
dren in the Northeast . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 259
9.2 Discussion and conclusion . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 266

Summary and conclusion 273

Bibliography 283

A List of Quotes 299

B Questionnaire 339
B.1 Original questionnaire in Portuguese . . . . . . . . . . . . . 339
B.2 English translation of the questionnaire . . . . . . . . . . . . 349
B.3 List of items and correspondent codes . . . . . . . . . . . . 357

C Questionnaires from the literature 361
C.1 TCM employee commitment survey (Meyer & Allen, 2004) 361
Contents

C.2 The COPE inventory (Carver, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989) . 363

D Fieldwork 369
  D.1 List of visited places ........................................ 369
  D.2 Geographical maps ........................................... 374
  D.3 Pictures ....................................................... 376
    D.3.1 Northeast ............................................... 376
    D.3.2 South .................................................. 390
    D.3.3 6th National Conference of the MST - Brasília, 2014 397
List of Figures

1.1 Number of settled families. ........................................... 27
2.1 Violence against occupations. ................................. 34
2.2 The MST’s organizational chart. ............................. 44
2.3 The MST’s flag. ..................................................... 52
3.1 The activists’ sustained participation and disengagement. . 85
5.1 95% confidence intervals for the normative commitment. . . 144
5.2 Model of sustained participation. ................................. 162
5.3 The activist’s normative commitment in each region. ....... 163
5.4 Commitment over time. .......................................... 163
6.1 Causes of gratifying participation. ............................. 178
8.1 95% confidence intervals for affective, continuance and normative commitment ................................. 226
8.2 Confidence intervals for willingness to continue participating. 236
D.1 Map of Brazil. ................................................... 374
D.2 Map of Pernambuco. .............................................. 375
D.3 Map of Rio Grande do Sul. ..................................... 375
D.4 Activist pitching his tent in the Filhos da Luta camp. .... 376
D.5 People watching the speech of the new leaders at the Filhos da Luta camp. ................................. 376
D.6 View of the Filhos da Luta camp. ............................. 377
D.7 Children playing in the irrigation canal in the José Arnaldo camp. ............................................. 377
D.8 Daily life in the José Arnaldo camp. ........................... 378
LIST OF FIGURES

D.9 Children playing video games in a little market in the Água viva settlement ........................ 378
D.10 Entrance of the Lagoa da Pedra camp ............................................................. 379
D.11 Detail from the inside of a mud house in Lagoa da Pedra ....................... 379
D.12 View of the Lagoa da Pedra camp ................................................................. 380
D.13 Entrance of the Hugo Chaves Camp ............................................................... 380
D.14 View of Hugo Chaves camp ............................................................................. 381
D.15 Entrance of the José Almeida settlement ......................................................... 381
D.16 View from the outside of the José Almeida settlement ................................. 382
D.17 Façade of a house in the São José do Vale settlement ................................. 382
D.18 Inside of a house in the São José do Vale settlement .................................. 383
D.19 Man turning back from the work on the land in the São José do Vale settlement ......................................................... 383
D.20 Centro de Formação Paulo Freire ................................................................. 384
D.21 People watching the presentations of the MST leaders .................................. 384
D.22 Young people participating in the mística during the Vozes da Terra course ......................................................... 385
D.23 View of the Normandia settlement ............................................................... 385
D.24 Mango production in the Safra settlement .................................................... 386
D.25 The contrast between the irrigated and the non-irrigated area in the Safra settlement ......................................................... 386
D.26 School in the Boquerão settlement ............................................................... 387
D.27 View of the Boquerão settlement ................................................................. 387
D.28 Woman working on her land in the Boquerão settlement ....................... 388
D.29 Unfinished brick house in the Milagre settlement ......................................... 388
D.30 View of the Milagre settlement ..................................................................... 389
D.31 Centro de Formação Sepé Tiaraju ................................................................. 390
D.32 Detail of a room door of the accommodation at the Centro de Formação Sepé Tiaraju ......................................................... 390
D.33 View of a house in the Filhos de Sepé settlement ........................................ 391
D.34 View of a house in the Filhos de Sepé settlement ........................................ 391
D.35 View of the Capela settlement ...................................................................... 392
D.36 COOPAN office in the Capela settlement ..................................................... 392
D.37 View of the inside of ITERRA ........................................................................ 393
D.38 Decoration before a mística inside ITERRA .................................................. 393
D.39 Façade of the Instituto Educar. .................. 394
D.40 Inside of the Instituto Educar. .................. 394
D.41 View of the Anoni settlement, one of the oldest MST settlements. ........ 395
D.42 View of the Anoni settlement. .................. 395
D.43 View of the Palmeiras settlement. .............. 396
D.44 Activists preparing a *mística* in front of the parliament building. ........ 397
D.45 March towards the parliament building. ....... 397
D.46 Arrival of the march at the parliament building. ...... 398
D.47 Arrival of the march at the parliament building. ...... 398
D.48 Arrival of the march at the parliament building. ...... 399
D.49 *Mística* during the 6th National Conference of the MST. .... 399
List of Tables

1.1 Camps on occupied land. ........................................... 30
4.1 Summary of the methodology of the study. ................. 100
4.2 Measurement of the questionnaire variables. ............... 103
4.3 Reliability score. .................................................. 104
4.4 Affective, continuance and normative commitment items. 107
4.5 Participant’s personal details. .................................. 117

5.1 Antecedents of affective commitment. ....................... 133
5.2 Antecedents of continuance commitment. .................... 140
5.3 Antecedents of normative commitment. ....................... 143
5.4 Antecedents of normative commitment. ....................... 145
5.5 Antecedents of ‘willingness to continue participating’ .... 150
5.6 Additional analysis on the antecedents of ‘willingness to continue participating’. ....................... 151
5.7 Summary of expected results. .................................. 154
5.8 Summary of unexpected results. .............................. 155

8.1 MANOVA results of the effects of ‘growing up in the MST communities’ on affective, continuance and normative commitment .................................................. 225
8.2 $\beta$ for the antecedents of affective commitment ......... 228
8.3 $\beta$ for the antecedents of continuance commitment. ........ 230
8.4 $\beta$ for the antecedents of normative commitment. ......... 233
8.5 $\beta$ for the antecedents of ‘willingness to continue participating’ 237

D.1 List of camps visited during the fieldwork. ............... 369
D.2 List of settlements visited during the fieldwork. ........... 370
LIST OF TABLES

| D.3  | List of cooperatives visited during the fieldwork. | 371 |
| D.4  | List of headquarters visited during the fieldwork. | 371 |
| D.5  | List of political education and technical training centres visited during the fieldwork. | 372 |
| D.6  | List of events visited during the fieldwork. | 372 |
| D.7  | List of collective actions and others. | 373 |